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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 THE HAGUE 000528

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DEPT FOR WHA/FO (C. SHAPIRO)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/09/2011

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [VE](#) [NT](#) [NL](#)

SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR WHA PDAS SHAPIRO'S VISIT TO THE
NETHERLANDS

REF: A) STATE 37476 B) 05 THE HAGUE 1556

Classified By: Political Officer Ted Burkhalter; reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)
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¶1. (C) Summary: Your visit comes at a time when GONL concern about Venezuela is growing. You could use this opportunity to press the Dutch to actively campaign against Venezuela's UNSC bid, and to help ensure a stronger EU response toward Venezuelan human rights and weapons procurement activities. On Colombia, the Dutch have been helpful and are considering future Dutch security sector reform activity. Be prepared to discuss Venezuela, Colombia, and regional issues, including recent and upcoming elections. End summary.

Netherlands Antilles and Aruba

¶2. (U) You will meet with Kingdom Affairs Director, of the Ministry of Interior, Drs. van Craiikamp. She will discuss the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba, which constitute the primary Dutch national interests in the Caribbean and South America. Their combined population of 290,000 has strong cultural and family ties to Venezuela. However, as demonstrated in the January Antillean elections, where pro-Chavez parties did extremely poorly, there is very little political interest in closer ties to Venezuela.

¶3. (U) The Netherlands Antilles entered inter-Kingdom discussions in November 2005 on constitutional reforms. The talks should conclude sometime in 2007 or 2008. Popular expectations in the islands are that they will result in increased autonomy similar to that of Aruba. The Dutch would like to see immigration and repatriation addressed. Delinquent Antillean youth living in The Netherlands have created crime problems in major cities like Rotterdam, and laws have already been passed facilitating the expulsion of unemployed or out-of-school youth. The Dutch parliament has become concerned about the administration of finances and the justice system in the Netherlands Antilles and is pressing for increased control.

¶4. (C) In Aruba, the Dutch are concerned about lax administration of customs and immigration. Interior Minister Pechtold visited earlier this year and privately informed local officials that, if procedures were not tightened up, the Dutch government might exercise its prerogative to intercede.

Venezuela and the Islands

¶5. (C) The GONL is concerned about Chavez's intentions toward the islands. The MFA tends to prefer engagement, in order

not to provoke Chavez. The military, including Defense Minister Kamp, take a harder line. Kamp told parliament on March 9 that Chavez "casts big eyes on the morsels along the coast of Venezuela that form part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands."

Military Exercises

¶6. (C) The Ministry of Defense, after substantial GONL review, was allowed to ramp up its Caribbean Lion exercise, which now includes an amphibious landing with three U.S. warships. Likewise, the Dutch, after lengthy hand-wringing, agreed to allow the aircraft carrier USS George Washington to make a port call in St. Maarten, following our Partnership of the Americas exercises. Although we would have preferred a carrier port call to Curacao, we see this as a positive step. Smaller ships will visit Aruba and Curacao.

¶7. (C) We have invited Dutch F-16s to participate in the Partnership of the Americas exercises but have not received a response. You might also raise the Antilles and Aruba SOFA, stressing that we are ready to move forward on a long-term agreement.

¶8. (C) The GONL shares our concern regarding Venezuela's growing ties with both Iran and Cuba, and they are concerned about the GOV's departure from democratic and human rights norms. The GONL does not want to see Venezuela obtain a UN Security Council seat, and you might ask them to play a stronger role in convincing other European countries to oppose the Venezuelan bid.

¶9. (C) The GONL opposes submarine sales to Venezuela but does

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not believe that the GOV is at this time making a serious procurement effort. The Dutch would be concerned by a serious procurement effort, and they have assured us that they would then be willing to press the issue vigorously within the EU. The GONL does not share our concern about small arms purchases to the Venezuelans, so you may wish to stress the destabilizing aspects of small arms sales to date.

Colombia

¶10. (C) The GONL has warm relations with Colombia and respects President Uribe. The MFA's new Security Sector Reform task force is exploring possibilities for eventual SSR projects there. Keeping in mind that Dutch SSR resources are currently focused on Africa, Iraq, Afghanistan and parts of the Balkans, you may want to at least welcome the interest in Colombia. The Dutch have just agreed to fund a \$77,000 shortfall for the completion of the UN Office of Drug Control Policy's coca production survey in Colombia.

Regional Issues

¶11. (C) Regionally, the Dutch are likely to raise Cuba, particularly ways in which the Dutch can assist in keeping open the channels of communication. On Bolivia, Foreign Minister Bot had a good meeting in January with Evo Morales. The two discussed at length the possibilities for Dutch technical assistance in natural gas exploration and exploitation. Bot stressed to Morales the importance of not imitating Chavez's anti-Americanism. Morales, according to the MFA, came off as "potentially" reasonable and level-headed. Finally, the Dutch will want to discuss recent and upcoming Latin American elections.

¶12. (C) The MFA does not intend to raise Guantanamo, but you should be prepared. Bot has parlayed much parliamentary criticism, by assuring PMs that he raises this issue with us at every opportunity. His subordinates have also

consistently mentioned it to USG visitors and embassy
officers.
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